

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 06427 01 OF 02 220738Z

ACTION NODS-00

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O 220630Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2440

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 6427

NODIS

PLEASE DELIVER TO EA ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOK AFTER 0800.

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOF, US, KS

SUBJECT: PROPOSED VISIT OF CONGRESSMEN HAMILTON AND SPENCE

REF: A. SEOUL 6415, B. CLARK/BLAKEMORE TELECON JULY 21
PM (SEOUL TIME)

1. MOFA CALLED MORNING JULY 22 TO REQUEST I MEET WITH FONMIN
AT HIS RESIDENCE AT 1145.

2. FONMIN STATED THAT HE HAD SEEN THE PRESIDENT JUST PRIOR
TO OUR MEETING AND HAD GIVEN HIM A FULL REPORT ON OUR CONVERSA-
TION AND ON THE LETTER FROM THE HOUSE LEADERSHIP. HE WAS NOW
IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE ME WITH THE ROKG POSITION ON THE
CONGRESSIONAL VISIT. HE SAID THE PRESIDENT FELT THE IDEA
OF SENDING PERSONAL EMISSARIES FROM WASHINGTON TO SEOUL
WOULD NOT MAKE A MEANINGFULCONTRIBUTION TO FINDING A SOLUTION
OF THE KIM DONG JO MATTER. THUS, HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO
SEE PERSONALLY THE TWO CONGRESSMEN SPEAKER O'NEILL HAD
PROPOSED SENDING TO SEOUL. THE PRESIDENT WISHED THE
SPEAKER TO KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT THE ROKG WAS PREPARED TO
RECEIVE ANY SPECIAL MESSAGE THE SPEAKER WISHED TO CONVEY.
THE PRESIDENT SUGGESTED ANY SUCH MESSAGE BE SENT TO SEOUL
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EITHER THROUGH THE ROK AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON OR THE
US AMBASSADOR IN SEOUL. UPON RECEIPT SUCH A MESSAGE WOULD
BE GIVEN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION AND A REPLY WOULD BE
PREPARED.

3. FONMIN STATED THAT THE PRESIDENT BELIEVED SENDING SPECIAL
EMISSARIES FROM WASHINGTON TO SEOUL ONLY SERVE TO

CREATE A GOOD DEAL OF PUBLICITY IN BOTH COUNTRIES. THE RESULTING ATMOSPHERE WOULD BE UNFAVORABLE FOR FINDING A SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM. FONMIN SAID THE PRESIDENT HAD ASKED THAT HE REMIND ME AND THROUGH ME THE PEOPLE CONCERNED IN WASHINGTON, THAT THE WILLINGNESS OF THE ROKG TO COOPERATE IN THIS MATTER REMAINS UNCHANGED. IN THIS RESPECT THE ROKG HAS ADVANCED ITS PROPOSAL ON HOW IT BELIEVES THE MATTER CAN BEST BE RESOLVED.

4. FONMIN, GOING ON TO EXPRESS HIS OWN VIEWS, STATED THAT IN READING THE O'NEILL/RHODES LETTER IT APPEARED TO HIM THAT THE MAIN POINT WAS TO DEVISE PROCEDURES ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES. THE SPEAKER SEEMED TO HAVE HAD SOME SUCH PROCEDURE IN MIND AND HIS EMISSARIES WOULD HAVE PRESUMABLY CARRIED THIS MESSAGE TO SEOUL. GIVEN THE ROKG POSITION THAT THE BEST PROSPECTS FOR SOLUTION LAY IN QUIET NEGOTIAION, HE SUGGESTED THAT ANY THOUGHTS THE SPEAKER HAD ALONG THESE LINES BE CONVEYED TO THE ROKG IN THE MANNER SUGGESTED BY THE PRESIDENT. USING EMISSARIES FOR THIS PURPOSE WOULD ONLY HEIGHTEN THE DRAMA AND MAGNIFY THE PROBLEM. FONMIN ASSURED ME THAT ANY MESSAGE FROM THE SPEAKER WOULD RECEIVE VERY SERIOUS CONSIDERATION AND A RESPONSE FRAMED IN THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AND A SEARCH FOR SOLUTION. HE STRESSED THAT THIS WAS NOT AN END TO THE MATTER AND THAT THE DOOR FOR QUIET DIALOGUE REMAINED OPEN.

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5. I EXPRESSED REGRET THAT THE ROKG HAD BEEN UNABLE TO ACCOMMODATE THE SPEAKER'S REQUEST WHICH WAS MOTIVATED BY A SEARCH FOR SOLUTION AND BY VERY REAL PRESSURES BEING FELT BY THE HOUSE LEADERSHIP IN WASHINGTON. THE DECISION WOULD IN MY VIEW CAUSE SERIOUS DISAPPOINTMENT IN WASHINGTON AND COULD WELL CREATE ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS. I AGAIN POINTED OUT THAT A MEETING WITH THE RPESIDENT WOULD HAVE PROVIDED THE ROKG WITH AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO PUT ITS POSITION CLEARLY AND POSITIVELY TO THE HOUSE LEADERSHIP. I TOLD THE FONMIN THAT I WAS PLEASED, HOWEVER, TO NOTE HIS STATEMENT THAT THE DOOR REMAINED OPEN FOR DIALOGUE ON THIS SUBJECT AND I PROMISED TO REPORT THE ROKG POSITION PROMPTLY TO WASHINGTON.

6. I THEN ASKED TO CLARIFY THE NATURE OF THE PRESENT OFFER OF THE ROKG. THE PROCESS COULD START WITH A TELEPHONE

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEIDATE 2441

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SEOUL 6427

NODIS

PLEASE DELIVER TO EA ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOK AFTER 0800.

CALL TO THE SPEAKER FROM KIM DONG JO, ALTHOUGH THIS WAS NOT ESSENTIAL. THE NEXT STEP WOULD BE THE SUBMISSION OF QUESTIONS TO KIM DONG JO FROM THE CONGRESS. FINALLY, KIM DONG JO WOULD RESPOND TO THE CONGRESSIONAL QUESTIONS IN WRITING. FONMIN CONFIRMED MY UNDERSTANDING. I TOLD HIM THAT WE WERE ENCOURAGED BY HIS PREVIOUS STATEMENT TO ME THAT THE ROKG WOULD URGE KIM DONG JO TO BE AS FORTHCOMING AS POSSIBLE, GOING BEYOND HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO DATE. FONMIN CONFIRMED THAT THIS WOULD BE THE ROKG POSITION, TAKEN IN THE SPIRIT OF SEEKING AN EARLY SOLUTION. I POINTED OUT TO HIM THAT THIS POSUTE WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN DEFENDING THE ROKG POSITION SINCE KIM DONG JO HAD AS YET NOT DIRECTLY CONFRONTED THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM.

7. THE FONMIN SAID THAT A GREAT DEAL WOULD DEPEND UPON THE MANNER IN WHICH THE QUESTIONS WERE POSED. IF THEY WERE COUCHED TO DRAW OUT A SATISFACOTY RESPONSE, THEN THE END RESULT WOULD BE BETTER FOR ALL CONCERNED. I SAID THAT THIS WAS A QUESTION THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE RESOLVED BY THE JAWORSKI STAFF.

8. I TOLD THE FONMIN I SAW THREE PROBLEM AREAS IN THIS MATTER. FIRST WAS THE NATURE OF THE RESPONSE PROVIDED BY
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KIM DONG JO. IT NEEDED TO BE FORTHCOMING AND COULD NOT BE A PRO FORMA DENIAL. SECOND WAS THE QUESTION OF AUTHENTICITY OF THE RESPONSE. REFLECTING DIFFERENT CULTURAL PATTERNS, SWORN STATEMENTS WERE THE MOST CONVINCING PROCEDURE FOR

AMERICANS, WHEREAS IN KOREA THERE SEEMED TO BE NO FELT NECESSITY FOR A HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL TO BE SUBJECTED TO THIS. FINALLY THERE WAS THE QUESTION OF VISIBILITY. WHILE THE ROKG DESIRE IS FOR QUIET TREATMENT OF THE PROBLEM, PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON FELT THE NEED FOR A VISIBLE DEMONSTRATION OF EFFORTS TO FIND A SOLUTION.

9. I TOLD THE FONMIN THAT IW WAS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE EMISSARIES, HAD THEY COME, WOULD HAVE BROUGHT OR PREVIEWED A PROPOSAL THAT MIGHT NOT BE IMMEDIATELY ACCEPTABLE TO THE ROKG. I ASKED IF THE ROKG WAS PREPARED TO RECEIVE SUCH A PROPOSAL AND TO BE FLEXIBLE IN ITS RESPONSE. FONMIN SAID THAT THE SPEAKER'S LETTER INDICATED THAT HE HAD SOMETHING IN MIND AND THAT THIS SHOULD BE PRESENTED TO THE ROKG FOR REVIEW.

10. FONMIN SAID THAT WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE ROKG COULD NOT ACCEPT ANY ACTION BY THE CONGRESS WHICH WOULD APPEAR TO BE OF AN INVESTIGATIVE NATURE. RATHER THE POINT WOULD BE TO OBTAIN INFORMATION FROM KIM DONG JO BY MAKING HIM QTE CLARIFY HIS POSITION UNQTE. IN THIS RESPECT HE SAID HE HAD SPOKEN TO KIM DONG JO, WHO WANTED TO CLEAR HIS NAME AND NOTB EFOREVER OPEN TO THE PRESENT CRITICISM OF HIM.

11. IN CONCLUSION I REITERATED THAT THE DECISION WOULD BE A GREAT DISAQPOINTMENT TO WASHINGTON AND THAT THERE WOULD BE PRESSURE IN SOME QUARTERS TO RESPOND SHARPLY. FONMIN AGREED, BUT SAID THAT HARMFUL PRESS ACTIVITY WOULD CREATE AN ADDITIONAL HURDLE TO REACHING AGREEMENT.
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HE NOTED THAT THE ROKG HAD BEEN VERY RESTRAINED IN ITS RESPONSE ON PL-480 AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT ALL ELEMENTS OF THE USG WOULD REACT IN THE SAME MANNER TO THIS ISSUE. HE CONCLUDED BY REQUESTING THAT I SOLICIT ANY MESSAGE THE SPEAKER WISHED TO CONVEY ASSURING HIM IN THE PROCESS THAT IT WILL RECEIVE SERIOUS STUDY AND A THOUGHTFUL RESPONSE. THE ROKG ALSO HOPED FOR AN EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THIS PROBLEM BASED ON MUTUALLY AGREEABLE PROCEDURES AS STATED IN THE SPEAKER'S LETTER.

12. COMMENT: WHILE WE ARE OBVIOUSLY DISAPPOINTED IN THE OUTCOME, IT IS MUCH AS WE EXPECTED. THE PRESIDENT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN STRAIGHTFORWARD IN HIS COMMENTS AND IT IS APPARENT THAT NEITHER HE NOR HIS ADVISERS WISH TO HAVE HIM DIRECTLY OR VISIBLY INVOLVED IN THIS MATTER.

13. IT IS ENCOURAGING THAT THE FONMIN LAID SUCH GREAT EMPHASIS ON THE FACT THAT THE DOOR TO QUIET DIALOGUE REMAINS

OPEN. FURTHER, IN SOLICITING A PROPOSAL FROM THE SPEAKER
AND IN DISCUSSING QTE MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTIONS UNQTE
THE FONMIN HAS DISPLAYED A DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY NOT APPARENT
IN HIS EARLIER INSISTENCE THAT THE PREVIOUS ROKG PROPOSAL
WAS FINAL.

14. WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT THE HOUSE LEADERSHIP PICK
UP ON THIS OFFER BY PRESIDENT PARK AND HIS FOREIGN MINISTER
AND PRESENT THE ROKG WITH A PROPOSAL AIMED AT BRIDGING
THE PRESENT IMPASSE. AT THE SAME TIME, WE URGE THAT
WE CONTINUE THIS EFFORT OUT OF THE GLARE OF PUBLICITY,
BECAUSE A PUBLIC ASSAULT ON THE KOREANS OVER THIS ISSUE
WILL FORCE THEM TO DIG IN AND WILL ELIMINATE ANY HOPE
OF REACHING A SOLUTION.
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